THE INNIS HERALD

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Finding ways to well-being together

OSL skills workshop inspires mental health community at Innis

COURTESY OF SABINE OSMANN-DEYMAN

Innis students attend a "Jack Talk" session, part of the inaugural Mental Health Skills Workshop Series, to learn about safe mental health storytelling from recent U of T alumni.

Jadine Ngan

INNIS LIFE

On November 1st, the Innis College Office of Student Life (OSL) launched the inaugural session of its Mental Health Skills Workshop Series. Consisting of several mental health wellness and training events that were offered throughout the month of November, the series will culminate in January with a capstone project — those who engage in every workshop will receive a CCR-eligible Mental Health Skills Certificate. Developed in consultation with students and aimed at empowering the Innis community in relation to mental health, the program represents a notable effort by the College administration to address student concerns, provide skill-building opportunities, and draw attention to available resources.

In an interview with the *Innis Herald,* Innis College's Dean of Students, Steve Masse, and Assistant Dean of Student Life, Sarah Burley Hollows, outlined the process of envisioning and implementing the program. Masse traced its inception to a conversation he and Burley Hollows had when he first became Dean in September 2018. At that time, the two flagged health and wellness, specifically mental health, as an "area of interest" for program development. In accordance with that conversation, Burley Hollows began looking into the best practices from the Canadian Mental Health Association and the Canadian Association of College University Student Services. Along with those practices, she considered information on student well-being and mental health from a variety of institutions and institutional surveys, including the National Survey of Student Engagement. By the time a "flurry of student advocacy," as Masse puts it, led to the organization of two "town halls" in the Winter semester, Burley Hollows had already begun assembling a proposal for what would eventually become the workshop series and certificate.

The first of the two town halls, called "Innis Confessions", was run by Tony Niu, the Innis College Student Society's International Student Representative at the time. Originally structured as a de-stress event, "Innis Confessions" adopted an increased mental health focus following a student death at the Bahen Centre. Niu told the *Innis Herald* that he "especially invited international students to share their experiences as an international student," but was surprised to find that "everyone there, including domestic students, had drastically different experiences regarding mental health services."

A group of four student advocates, Oliver Daniel, Annie Liu, Kathy Sun, and Jehan Vakharia, spearheaded another initiative in the form of a Mental Health Forum that invited open discussion and community input on the subject.

Masse was in attendance of both. "What I heard fit quite well with what we'd been hoping to achieve [with] the new certificate," he noted. "That was really validating for me, seeing... those numbers jump off the page with real students." He identified that at this point, the project he and Burley Hollows had been working on began to take shape in "intention and initiative."

Over the summer, supplemental research, assisted by Transition Programs Assistant and recent graduate Maddie Freedman, provided additional direction. Masse pointed to three broad categories that emerged, into which the finalized workshops fall: "there are a number of sessions... that encourage participants to take an inward look at their own mental health and their own well-being, a couple that center student voices and experiences for folks who've experienced difficulty related to their mental health, and finally an additional couple of sessions specifically related [to] skill-building, that [hope] to increase

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We are committed to covering stories that matter to students. Our content aims to help students connect to their college, campus, city, and world.

RECYCLE OR DIE.

WAYS TO WELL-BEING, *continued from page 1*

the capacity of our community."

The six-part program began with a launch event on November 1, then proceeded with a "5 Ways to Well-being" workshop run by Health and Wellness. Prior to the launch, participants were meant to have completed an online training module called 'Identify, Assist, Refer,' which Burley Hollows said is "a program that's rolled out quite broadly across campus."

"We heard from our consultations... that students wanted the ability to help. That resonated quite a bit. They wanted the ability to do something... to help make this place feel a bit more supportive, a bit more inclusive," Masse said.

"But one of the things that we all acknowledged at the outset was that you need to be in touch with your own well-being, your own mental health, before you're able to help others. That was one of the reasons why, very early on in the certificate, we hosted 5 Ways to Well-being."

"Once you're connected to your own mental well-being and understand the importance of self care, we shift... to the hard skills." By 'hard skills,' Masse seemed to be referring to the safeTALK training session, facilitated by Masse himself in the Innis Residence's Events Room. SafeTALK, the longest event in the series, is described by the Ontario Association for Suicide Prevention as a "three-hour training program that prepares helpers to identify persons with thoughts of suicide and connect them to suicide first aid resources." Masse expressed a willingness to run additional safeTALK sessions "as many times as we can get folks in the room."

The safeTALK training was followed by a Jack Talk, facilitated by the Registered Canadian Charitable Organization jack.org, and administered by two U of T alumni from St. Michael's College. "That [event] speaks to the need and want of having student voices at the centre," Burley Hollows emphasized. She said that in this session, "youth and young adults speak to other youth and young adults around mental health... They have—I believe what they call it is—safe storytelling guidelines, and it's an opportunity to hear others' stories in a really real setting...that is comfortable for the audience... and allows people to reflect appropriately."

The Mental Health Roadmap on November 27th had yet to take place when the *Innis Herald* spoke to Burley-Hollows and Masse. "Students, staff, and faculty are all being invited to participate in an Innis conversation about resources that are available both on and off campus, recognizing that no one resource is appropriate or suitable in all circumstances and for all students," Masse said in anticipation of the event. With the Roadmap, the diversity of participants' voices becomes key; Masse described it as "sharing across constituencies."

Diversity was an important consideration for the design of the program as a whole. Masse admitted that diversity was insufficiently present in earlier versions of the workshop series, and that it was the September consultations with Daniels, Liu, Sun, and Vakharia that highlighted an increased need for equity. "We actually brought back to them... a list of the ways that we ensured that each of the sessions at its core was formulated and developed with principles of equity, diversity, [and] inclusion," he said.

In January, the final element in the series, the capstone project, will close certificate participations' experience by allowing them to represent what they've learned. "They can be as creative as they like, or fill out a questionnaire that I provide them," Burley Hollows said, highlighting that the projects will serve a secondary function of gathering feedback. She anticipates that once submitted, they will "help us decide for the future if this was the right process... so that we can do better in the future."

Burley Hollows expressed a desire to "get as many people through the certificate as possible." Accordingly, she made herself available for "one-on-one meetings for individuals who've missed the launch... to make sure they feel like they can do the whole certificate even if they came on late."

Overall, a community-centred orientation emerged as a central intention of the program's design: "The reason we went with the certificate specifically related to the intent to foster relationships and a sense of camaraderie and belonging among participants," Masse explained. "We also recognize that doing this kind of work can be challenging, and [we know] how important it is for students to have other people to rely upon, to debrief, [and] to talk through difficult situations."

As for what they hope attendees emerge from the program with? "I hope that participants... feel empowered, feel more comfortable talking about mental health... I hope that they feel that they have the ability to help others who are struggling and get access to resources," Masse said. "I hope that they feel that the community, the Innis community, is one that is compassionate, supportive, and helpful."

Burley Hollows added, "I hope that people leave, no matter where they've started in their knowledge, feeling that they've learned a little bit more, whether that's about themselves, about others, about wellness, or even in the reduction of stigma." She believes that the certificate's current core participants "are really diverse and kind and thoughtful people," and desires that "they leave... these multiple conversations they're having really seeing the kindness in others," and translating that into the communities around them.

Liu, a second-year student specializing in Bioinformatics and Computational Technology, was encouraged that students were consulted and their voices prioritized during the program's development. "I definitely think that there was a need for people to learn more mental health skills and the fact that Steve was already thinking about this really shows how much different people in the Innis community care," she said. Liu is now a participant in the program herself and she is happy with the engagement from the student body: "There was a pretty good turnout at the welcome event, more than I expected." Masse and Burley Hollows had estimated that around 45 students had initially registered and a core of around 25 participants emerged from that group. On this, Liu adds, "it shows that people really care about this and that gives you a lot of hope, you know? The fact that Innis and the OSL [are] trying to find ways to facilitate normalizing this sort of situation is fantastic."

Vakharia, who is also participating in the certificate, echoed an appreciation for the college's efforts: "they've put in a lot of work into this, and that was really nice to see because it's just genuinely for student benefit." He expressed that he had been involved in broader U of T mental health initiatives and called the Innis administration's approach "refreshing" in comparison. "I can say that, you know, we're at a better place—slightly—than where we were a year ago, but we could be doing a lot better. It's nice to see the Innis administration be so supportive of our efforts, because you don't see it so much outside of Innis."

In terms of what she hopes to see moving forward, Liu anticipates that if this iteration of the workshop series runs well, repeat sessions will be offered in semesters to come. In addition, she'd like to see this program, or a similar one, rolled out at different locations across campus. But she concluded, "[just] as long as this momentum to learn more about mental health keeps going, then I'm satisfied."

If you're experiencing mental health issues and would like to speak with a professional, here are some options outside of U of T's Health and Wellness department:

- Stella's Place offers free drop-in mental health appointments
  Website: www.stellasplace.ca
  Location: Spadina Ave. and Richmond St.
- Skylark offers a "What's up" walk in therapy clinic
  Website: www.skylarkyouth.org
  Location: Church St. and Wellesley St.
- Good2Talk offers 24/7 free, confidential, professional counselling for post-secondary students in Ontario
  Phone number: 1-866-925-5454

We need action now

U of T can support student mental health by changing academic policies

Daria Mancino

OPINION

COURTESY OF VICTOR XIAO

U of T administration should make immediate improvements to some of its academic policies to support student wellbeing, writes Daria Mancino.

U of T is experiencing a mental health crisis, a fact I no longer feel the need to validate with examples—they are too many and too frequent to leave any doubt that the crisis is real and that it is happening right now. Student activists have been working tirelessly to lobby our University's administration to make immediate and meaningful changes to support student mental wellness. Unsurprisingly, change has been slow, if not essentially nonexistent.

The core message from student activists has been for the University to take a proactive, rather than reactive, stance on mental health. The majority of U of T's existing policies are in place for students who are already experiencing or have experienced mental health challenges or crises. While these services are undoubtedly important, students want the University to also support students in a way that reduces the incidence and severity of these mental health concerns and fosters student wellness throughout the entirety of their degree.

While U of T has established a Presidential & Provostial Task Force on Student Mental Health, the University has yet to make any significant changes to its operations or services to immediately support student wellness. Task forces and student consultations are a necessary part of the University's long-term work, but cannot replace the need for immediate action from the administration. Many necessary policies will take time and care to implement properly, but I believe there are policies that can be easily implemented *now* that will both improve student mental wellness and signal that U of T is willing to enact real change to benefit students.

Where do these changes start? With a few simple clicks on ACORN, the University's website for students to manage their information and academic needs. Many of U of T's existing academic policies could easily be changed to prioritize the needs of students and promote a culture that is supportive of mental wellness on campus.

Extending the credit/no credit and drop deadlines

Allowing students more time to make decisions about their courses is one of the easiest ways that the administration can begin to lessen the academic pressure put on students by being understanding of their diverse life circumstances. The credit/no-credit option is a good place to start.

U of T's credit/no-credit option for courses (CR/NCR) allows students to have up to 2.0 credits appear as a "credit" (pass) or "no-credit" (fail) on their transcript rather than receive a grade for that course. These courses then neither affect a student's GPA nor count towards their program requirements, but they do count towards degree requirements needed to graduate. Some students use their CR/NCR credits on elective courses or breadth requirements to lighten their workload, while others use them on courses in which they are not scoring as well as they hoped.

At the St. George campus, students can CR/NCR classes up until early November for fall classes, early March for spring classes, and mid-February for year-long classes. While this is two-thirds of the way into the semester, most students do not actually have a good idea of how they are doing in a class at these cut-off points. Some professors will only have handed back one assignment, which can be nonrepresentative of students' success in the class. That is to say, some students may do well on the first assignment or test in a class, but experience hardship later in the semester which seriously impacts their academic performance.

While students are sometimes able to CR/NCR classes past the deadline through their college registrars, many students do not know about this option. Additionally, this decision should not be something that students have to meet with their registrar to discuss. Students should have full autonomy over their courses and decisions surrounding them. It is within U of T's power to make that a reality.

Allowing students to CR/NCR a class up until the last day of classes would lessen the emotional and mental strain that students experience during the academic year. It would show that the University values student wellbeing and overall success over arbitrary academic policies. It would put students in greater control of their degree.

It is worth noting that this policy is already in place at both U of T's Scarborough campus (UTSC) and its Mississauga campus (UTM). At UTSC and UTM, students are able to CR/NCR courses up until the last day of class. They are able to do this on their own, without speaking to a registrar or justifying their decision. Why this practice is not in place at the St. George campus is beyond me.

In a similar vein, U of T should allow students to completely drop a course without academic penalty until the last day of classes. This would be an especially important step for students who experience any sort of personal crises, mental health related or otherwise, over the course of the semester. Extending the drop course deadline would replace the existing late-withdrawal (LWD) designation that appears on students' transcripts if they decide to drop a course past the cut-off date.

Giving students greater control over their courses and giving them room to make mistakes is central to fostering student well-being on campus. U of T is known for its unforgiving and punatory academic environment, and changing the CR/NCR and drop deadlines is one way to start to undo this toxic campus culture.

Cap late penalties at 3% per day

In the classroom, administration could support student well-being and success by capping penalties for late assignments to 3% per day. Some professors already use this low late penalty and some go even lower, to 2% or 1% per day. Others, however, have late penalties as high as 10%—an entire letter grade—per day or, in departments like computer science, per hour. These penalties adds to student stress, particularly during the busiest times of year.

I understand that late penalties serve a purpose and I am not arguing that they should be entirely revoked, but they should be implemented in a way that is understanding of students' circumstances. Many students have to juggle upwards of 5 deadlines in the same week, often for multiple weeks in a row. Assuming that students could manage these unreasonable expectations if they just tried harder misses the point. The University should not be creating these circumstances for students in the first place, but completely reforming this environment will require long-term, incremental change. As long as U of T maintains its unreasonable and sometimes unattainable standards, the least the University can do is build in small mechanisms to support student wellbeing.

The road ahead

These suggestions are merely a few ways that the administration can take immediate, decisive action to begin to support a culture of mental wellness on campus.

Some may point out that many of my recommendations are actually available to students through various petitions and appeal processes at U of T, which is true. But those petitions are long, hard-fought, and emotionally draining processes in which students are forced to retell their personal experiences again and again in order to justify their difficult decisions to administrators. Students should not have to fight for these decisions; they should be made accessible to all.

If U of T is sincere about its commitment to student mental health, it needs to start making structural changes where they really matter. And it needs to start making them now.

Don’t shoot the messenger

The problem with criminalizing human smugglers

COURTESY OF REUTERS

A vigil held for the victims who died in a lorry in Essex. This tragedy highlights the fact that highly restrictive and criminalized travel, rather than human smugglers, are to blame for migrant deaths, writes Marlose Streppel.

Marloes Streppel

OPINION

On October 24th, 39 dead Vietnamese migrants were found in the back of a truck in Essex as their attempt to enter the United Kingdom came to a horrific end. The tragedy was labelled by the UK media as “one of the largest homicide investigations in Britain’s history,” leaving the public eager to find someone to condemn and blame for this atrocity.

The Vietnamese embassy in London stated that, “Vietnam will work closely with the UK to bring the criminals to justice and find effective measures to prevent a similar tragedy from happening again in the future.” Along similar lines, Boris Johnson asserted, “we in the government of the United Kingdom resolve to do everything in our power to bring the perpetrators to justice.” In both statements, the public is told one clear message: human smuggling is to blame for irregular and unsafe migration to the UK.

It is undeniable that human smugglers are responsible for many tragedies involving migrants. However, the moral panic created around smugglers demonizes irregular migration, working to immunize the state from criticism of the conditions they create. Human smugglers are not the root of the issue, but are instead merely responding to an increasing demand for movement in an increasingly travel-restricted world. Criminalizing human smuggling as a means of deterring irregular immigration is equally as effective as watering your lawn to fight a national drought. The root of the issue is not addressed and, if anything, you have wasted resources and caused a distraction.

Grace Tran, a U of T PhD candidate at the Centre for Criminology and Sociolegal Studies, wrote in the *Toronto Star* that by criminalizing smugglers and migrants, “we are opting for the convenience and comfort of not questioning who rightfully deserves to be here, premised on a notion that depends not on our qualifications or merits as individuals, but rather, on mere place of birth.” By lottery of birth, those 39 migrants were born in conditions of insecurity while policymakers in the UK were born in conditions of stability and comfort. This chance of birth is then employed as a legally justified mechanism of determining individual worth.

After the 39 deaths, Maddy Allen, a field manager at Help Refugees, stated that the UK government had “blood on their hands.” She adds, “[if] you tighten the security measures, people are going to take a more dangerous journey.” When governments continue to make their ‘legitimate’ ports of entry more restrictive and continuously prolong the application process, individuals in dire conditions all over the world can no longer afford to wait around.

With 4.2 billion people currently living in poverty and the global North-South income gap growing, people are moving and will continue to move in search of a better life. Meanwhile, the immigration system is becoming increasingly confusing and expensive. Debbie Busler, head of refugee support at the British Red Cross, states, “[official] resettlement routes can take years to navigate with a complicated ‘adversarial system’ often lacking simple support services like interpreters.”

This complexity becomes visible when one realizes that the UK alone has seen seven different immigration bills in their government from 2010 to 2018, each of which contains a multitude of significant changes and makes the law extremely difficult to navigate. For those who cannot access legal advice, legal aid (free legal advice or representation offered by the government) is provided. However, legal aid services have been decimated by constant budget cuts, leaving reliable legal work inaccessible to migrants. On top of the legal hoops one has to jump through, the system is costly and, much like the legal framework, continually changing. According to the *Guardian*, the settlement, residence, and nationality fees for 2016–17 increased by 25%. If you want to become a permanent resident of the UK, it will cost you £2,389 ($4082.08 CAD). This does not include a £50 ($85.44 CAD) fee for the citizenship test or a £150 ($256.31 CAD) fee for an English exam. Such high costs undoubtedly affect poor migrants the most.

It then comes as no surprise that since 2016, according to Busler, “there have been fewer and fewer ways to enter Western Europe legally — hence the desperation of those on the road.” As the ‘right ways’ to enter the county are becoming more difficult and expensive and the ‘wrong ways,’ or irregular means of entry, are increasingly securitized, migrants are placed in an almost impossible situation.

The death of the 39 migrants have shown how increases in border security or crackdown on smugglers will not deter people from searching for safety in the UK or other affluent nations. Instead, the law will push them into a corner, remove safer options, and force them to pursue increasingly dangerous routes to reach sounder shores.

When we sanction and criminalize human smugglers for ‘encouraging’ irregular migration, we shoot the messenger and ignore the message: our increasingly restrictive and securitized borders are forcing people to risk everything for the right to move. We penalize human smugglers for presenting migrants with a possible path to a better life, and subsequently ignore the state’s role in creating the restrictive border system that creates the demand for their services in the first place.

What the 2019 election means for climate action

George Kell

OPINION

COURTESY OF RYAN REMIORZ / THE CANADIAN PRESS

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau marches in the Montreal climate strike. Trudeau's minority government will need to cooperate with opposition parties and address the concerns of western Canada in order to make progress on climate, writes George Kell.

Depending on your political affiliation, the 2019 election results were either disappointing or relieving. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was re-elected with a minority mandate of 157 seats (170 seats are required to win a majority government). The Conservatives will continue to be the Official Opposition with a stronger base of 121 seats, and the Bloc Québécois, New Democratic Party (NDP), and Green Party have 32, 24, and 3 seats respectively. What does this mean for environmental policy in Canada?

Parliament

Let's start off with the fact that the Liberals lost their majority mandate. Majorities are relatively common in Canada and, due to the nature of our Westminster parliamentary system, minorities are usually considered unstable. This instability arises because the leading party has to either appeal to at least one other major party (in our case, the Conservatives, Bloc, or NDP) to gain at least 170 seats in the House of Commons, or risk triggering another election.

The reason why this electoral outcome is important for environmental policy is because the carbon tax and most other similar carbon pricing mechanisms have been incredibly unpopular with the Conservatives as a feasible way to fight climate change. If the Liberals wish to continue pushing through their current environmental policy, they need to compromise with either the NDP, Bloc, or Conservatives.

The good news is that all of these parties believe in climate change and have proposed substantive (if controversial) policies to combat climate change. The bad news is that nobody can agree on what is best. How do you balance economic development, climate change efforts, and federalism in a minority government situation?

It is important to consider each party's policy on this issue, as well as how the minority Liberal government might find common ground with the Opposition parties.

Liberals

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau signed Canada onto the Paris Agreement in 2016 and the first four years of his mandate involved introducing a carbon pricing system meant to curb Canada's usage of greenhouse gases and other emissions.

For the 2019 election, the Liberals proposed a more robust environmental policy, including banning single-use plastics by 2021, planting two billion trees in ten years, creating a "Clean Water Agency" in collaboration with other governments, Indigenous communities, and scientists to protect our water supply, as well as mandating that all federal buildings be completely powered by clean energy by 2022, among other policies to which they had already committed.

Conservatives

The Conservatives, known for their opposition to carbon pricing, waited until June 2019 to release what they considered to be a viable alternative to the carbon pricing model. They adopted a more business and innovation-oriented approach, proposing emission standards that would force major emitters to invest in the research, development, and adoption of green technologies if they exceed their emissions limit.

This policy is meant to punish emitters and incentivize the private sector to be greener. Other policies include a Green Patent Credit, meant to incentivize entrepreneurs to develop green technologies in Canada, and creating an online hub for green innovators to seek talent and resources.

Bloc Quebecois

Despite their name, the Bloc Quebecois under leader Yves-François Blanchet has found a way to appeal to a larger Quebecois base without invoking their infamous calls for separation from Canada. Part of that appeal involved proposing an environmental policy similar to cap-and-trade, where Ottawa would tax higher-emitting provinces and reward lower-emitting provinces with the proceeds from the tax. Further policies included ending fossil fuel subsidies and rejecting the Energy East pipeline project.

New Democrats

The New Democrats proposed a number of ambitious policies, including declaring a climate emergency, ending fossil fuel subsidies, and supporting Indigenous leadership on climate action. The NDP proposed providing subsidies to boost national investment in renewable energy and low-carbon technology, including re-directing federal funds to low-carbon projects and electrifying all public transit by 2030.

#Wexit?

Going beyond simply party policies and how they might cooperate, it is crucial to look at the implications for Western Canada. In the prairie provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, almost no Liberal MPs were elected (in Saskatchewan and Alberta, none were elected). Obviously, the question that ought to be asked is: why not? What was it about Liberal policy that persuaded most living in the Prairies to vote Conservative or NDP?

The generally accepted opinion is that the Western provinces have felt alienated, especially energy workers in Alberta. With the environmental justice and Indigenous sovereignty issues that have come to the fore regarding the Trans Mountain pipeline, the Liberal government under Trudeau has infamously flip-flopped, angering both supporters and detractors of the pipeline.

Although the Liberals did purchase the pipeline for $4.5 billion in 2018 and have pledged to move forward with it, action will depend on the role that the government chooses to play with activists that both want and do not want the pipeline, as well as reckoning with the fact that the party has to cooperate with one of the three Opposition parties to get bills passed in the House of Commons.

However, the fact that nothing is set in stone regarding the pipeline does not seem to be enough for the West. In light of the re-election of the Liberals and the fact that 33 out of Alberta's 34 seats went to the Conservatives (one in Edmonton went to the NDP), there have been increasingly radical calls for the West to separate from the rest of Canada.

Part of this is due to a continuation of federalist conflict between Edmonton and Ottawa. Any energy policy proposed by the government needs to take into account the economic consequences for Westerners. The Liberals did not have to buy the Trans Mountain pipeline, and there may be merit in a system which transitions workers from the oil sector to the renewable energy sector. However, this transition would take time, patience, and cooperation on the part of the government. Not all decisive governments are unpopular, but all indecisive ones are.

Room for Cooperation?

In the words of the BBC, "Albertans' common concerns can be summarised with three words: representation, equalisation, and oil." Environmental policy, especially under the Liberals, needs to reflect the needs and proposals of the NDP and Conservatives to succeed. Both these parties, albeit in different ways, see the idea of investing in businesses and entrepreneurs as tantamount to a successful transition to a green economy. They both look at the structural basis for oil reliance and try to transform it.

Nobody would reasonably object to the Liberals's idea of a "Clean Water Agency". Clean water is necessary, but so is the economic and job prospects of those from Alberta, Saskatchewan, and every other province. However, even in the most ambitious scenario—where the pipeline is scrapped and the carbon tax is successfully rolled out through Canada—we need to convince all Canadians that the benefits are worth the costs.

The Conservatives won the popular vote in the 2019 election. For anybody who is not Conservative, their victory could have been a nightmare scenario, but the goal of pushing for every party to have a feasible policy for fighting climate change was almost reached in this election. The only party who did not have any climate policy, Maxime Bernier's People's Party of Canada, did not win a single seat.

Where do we go from here? As we transition to a minority parliament, the two themes we need to keep in mind are *cooperation* and *climate action*.

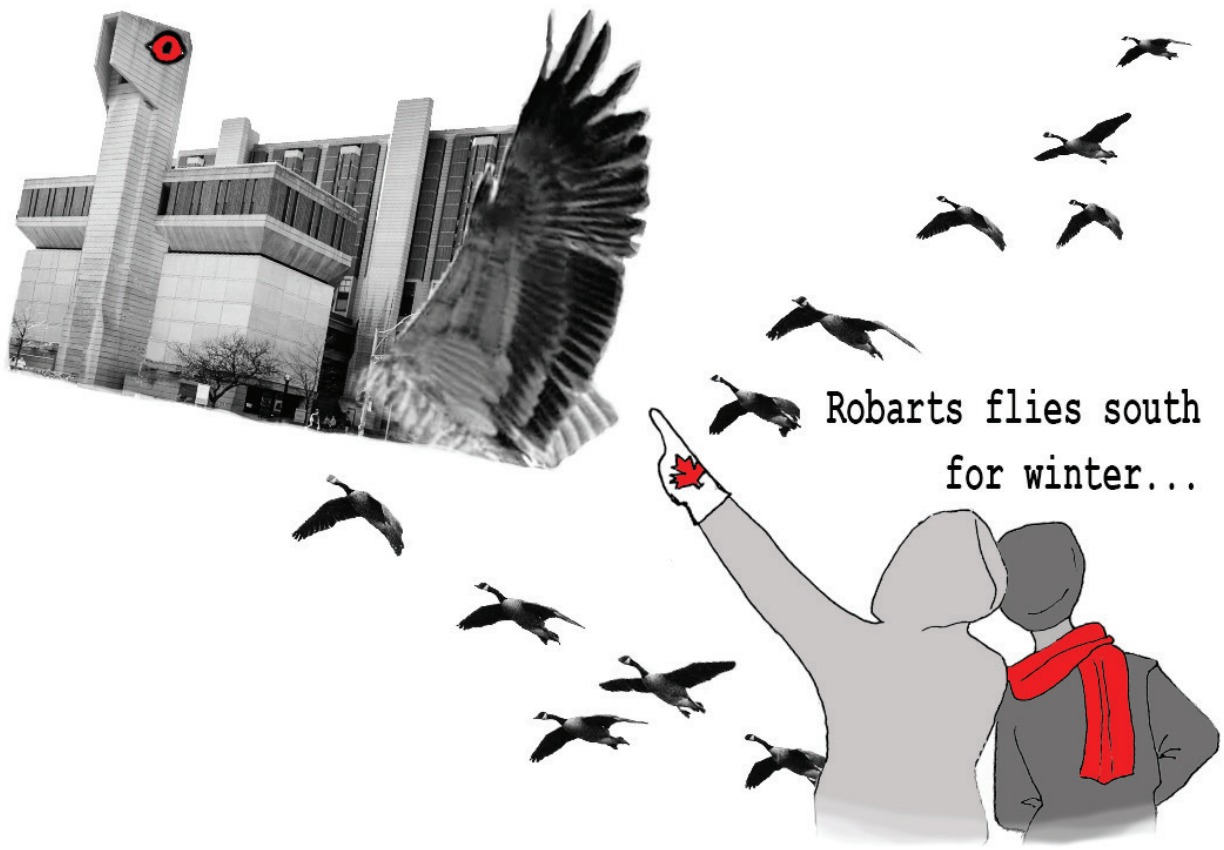
Cooperation is necessary for a democracy to function and to get the concerns of constituents to the table, especially to allow for a synthesis of views on environmental policy.

Climate action is necessary to ensure that the next generations of Canadians live in a land that is as beautiful, clean, and liveable as the one we live in today. The end is not political—it never has been. What *is* political is the means of getting there.

How to U of T

Surviving winter in Toronto

Meghan Gheron
STUDENT LIFE



COURTESY OF ISOBEL HEINTZ

Toronto winters can be challenging, to say the least. But with the right tips and tricks, anyone can make the most of the winter season, writes Meghan Gheron.

It's official: winter has come to Toronto. Whether you love or hate the snow, you can't escape it—so here are some tips on surviving our infamous winter season.

Invest in good cold weather clothes:

Let's face it: you're here in Toronto for the foreseeable future, so it makes sense to make an investment in good winter clothes. You don't need to buy the fanciest or most expensive brands, but it's important to buy hardy, effective clothes that will last you through the entire season and hopefully future winters as well. As you have a warm, durable, waterproof winter jacket, boots, gloves, and a hat, you'll be fine. If you're more sensitive to the cold or you plan to spend a lot of time in the snow, you can also think about additional clothing articles like scarves and snowpants. All of your clothes should be waterproof (especially your boots—soggy socks are the worst!), and wind-proof jackets are always a good idea. In addition, make sure to layer. Jeans aren't enough to keep your legs warm! It's good practice in particular to wear thermal bottoms: underwear, leggings, pants, and socks. Staying dry is key to staying warm.

Beware of the ice:

You might be intimidated by the snow and the wind, but ice is your true enemy here in Toronto and especially on campus, which, on occasion, turns into the city's largest ice skating rink. Watch out for black ice, ice hidden under snow, campus sidewalks, and stairs in general. Last year the sidewalk in front of Innis was especially bad—I had my first public full-on wipeout there, which thankfully didn't end in serious injury, but did end in serious embarrassment. Wear shoes or boots with good ankle support and good grip. Remember to try to "walk like a penguin" while navigating icy surfaces. Take short, slow, shuffling steps, and keep your centre of gravity low. It might look silly, but it can save you from a serious tumble. And who doesn't love penguins?

Watch out for the wind chill:

When it comes down to it, Toronto's temperatures aren't that bad. Just like humidity in the summer, it's wind chill that's the real killer. Make sure to account for wind chill when you're assessing the weather for the day and dressing up. It may surprise you!

Be aware of cold weather days:

While it's cold more often than not during Toronto winters, we have several days a year where the weather becomes downright dangerous as opposed to unpleasant. Generally, an extreme cold weather warning will be put into place by the city. These alerts can affect school hours and transit, and tend to activate services for the city's most vulnerable, such as warming centres. On these days, it's advised to spend as little time outside as possible. If you are required to be outside, make sure you cover up: at these temperatures, frostbite can develop on exposed skin within minutes. It's most common on toes and fingers, noses, chins and cheeks, so wear gloves, scarves, and thick socks. Make sure to layer properly (wear a sweater under your coat!) because frostbite can occur even on covered skin if your clothes aren't thick enough to protect you properly. Watch out for any metal in contact with your skin, such as glasses or necklaces, as that can also hasten frostbite.

Plan your commutes and travel carefully:

Commuting in the winter months can be a nightmare. Delays, closures, crashes—you would think Toronto drivers would eventually learn to cope with the snow and ice that comes around every year, but no dice. Take extra care in planning your commutes. Leave earlier to account for the inevitable delays, particularly when exams roll around, and keep an eye on the weather. Don't count on official snow days (the university is notoriously fickle with them, as we all know), but don't compromise your safety in bad weather conditions. If you're like me and you still do plenty of walking and biking in the winter, make sure to remain extra alert: with ice on the roads, don't trust cars to stop on time as you cross roads. Likewise, drive carefully if you have your own vehicle; Toronto experiences a significant increase of car accidents in the winter months when everyone on the roads collectively loses their minds.

Prioritize your mental health:

It's not uncommon for students to suffer from seasonal affective disorder as the weather takes a turn for the worse. International or out-of-town students accustomed to warmer temperatures might be hit especially hard. It's important to remember to remain active, eat well, and make certain you are getting enough Vitamin D by taking Vitamin D pills, or try the light therapy lamps in Robarts, which simulate spring and summer light levels. Remember to prioritize self-care and seek help when you need it. Don't just brush it off as "winter blues". If your mental health is suffering significantly, don't be afraid to book an appointment to see a doctor or mental health specialist. Look after yourself this winter!

Editor's note: you can access resources by booking an appointment with Innis' mental health counselor through the Registrar's office, or drop in on a free therapy session offered by organizations such as Stella's Place and Skylark.

Don't be too afraid and try to enjoy the season:

Though our winters can be long and harsh, I often find out-of-towners' concerns to be overblown. I've had to reassure various people that, no, we are not experiencing a mini Ice Age here in Toronto. There are only a few days a year where our temperatures become truly risky; the rest of the time you'll be fine as long as you dress relatively warmly and remain smart and alert. You'll get used to Toronto weather and all its intricacies in no time. Our winters can be quite lengthy—we had an unfortunately early start this year with our record-breaking snowfall in November—so for your own sake, try to find things you enjoy about it. Drink hot chocolate, go tobogganing (Christie Pits park is a great spot!), skate in Nathan Phillips Square, or check out the picturesque Christmas Market in the Distillery District. Get yourself into the holiday mood by treating yourself to a seasonal drink, or snuggling up in cozy pajamas and blankets when you study. Our city might be cold in the winter, but it has so many things to offer you, so take advantage of as many nice winter opportunities as you can!

TORONTO WINTER ACTIVITES

Check out these fun winter activities happening in city this month!

- Distillery District Christmas Market
- Wonderland WinterFest
- Ontario Place Aurora Winter Festival
- Hot Docs for the Holidays
- Skating at:
  - Toronto City Hall
  - Union Station
  - The Bentway
  - The Harbourfront

How to U of T

Getting involved in second semester

Daniel Li

STUDENT LIFE

The fall semester is almost over and chances are you've gotten a better sense of what you're doing. Maybe you've found yourself spending too much time twiddling your thumbs, looking for something invigorating to do. Perhaps you've learned that spending your mornings at the library studying, afternoons at lectures, and evenings back home doing more studying, isn't all there is to the quintessential university experience. Luckily for you, the winter semester still brings plenty of opportunities to get involved on campus.

The Innis College Student Society (ICSS)

The Innis Herald reached out to the Innis College Student Society (ICSS) hoping to get an idea of what opportunities they have for student involvement. "Within the ICSS, the second semester is filled with opportunities and services that you are able to participate and get involved with," said Paul Kaita, the Executive Vice-President of the ICSS. "The ICSS has been hard at work since May ensuring that students have a way to just take a break from their studies and have a bit of fun in the stress of UofT."

Each of the portfolios at the ICSS has events planned throughout the semester. Aside from reading week, there's rarely a single week where the ICSS doesn't have any events planned. In the winter semester, you can expect to see the highly-anticipated Innis Formal, organized by the Social Directors. The Equity and Outreach Directors will be showcasing the artistic and musical talents of Innis students at their benefit concert and their annual art gala. You can also look forward to free food events and de-stressing events hosted by the Commuter Representatives.

The winter semester is also a great time to start thinking about getting involved in student leadership roles for the 2020-2021 academic school year. Elections for ICSS positions will be opening up soon. "For involvement with the council through specific roles, our Spring General Election will be taking place throughout the second semester," explained Nancy Zhao, president of the ICSS. "If you have any questions about the upcoming Spring General Election, we'd love to help out! Keep an eye out for more information to be released in the upcoming term!"

Innis College Choir is always looking for new members! No auditions necessary, just come by their weekly practices and sing your heart out.

The U of T Poker Club meets every friday in the Innis Residence events room and provides a space to play board games with new friends.

Stay updated with the ICSS and all their events by following them on Facebook and Instagram.

Innis College Clubs

The ICSS also funds a number of independently run clubs that host their own events and meetings. If the ICSS is the metaphorical brain of student involvement at Innis, then the clubs are the metaphorical heart. There are a variety of clubs that you can get involved in during the second semester.

INpride, a student-run group that advocates and supports LGBTQ+ students, holds biweekly meetings where all are welcome. They often also run inclusive events. If board games, poker, and mahjong are your thing, then you should consider attending TGIF's biweekly game nights. The club often collaborates with the University of Toronto Poker Club and the University of Toronto Mahjong Society to host tournaments. Beginners are always welcome and are encouraged to stop by and learn a new game!

For all the singers out there, The Innis College Choir is always looking for new members. There are no auditions, so you're always welcome to drop in during their weekly practices at the Innis Residence's music room. The Innis Art Club hosts events from time to time, giving students the opportunity to express their artistic ability. You can expect events like group Bob Ross painting and several arts and crafts, such as pressed flowers.

Very recently, the ICSS has collaborated with the Woodsworth College Students' Association (WCSA) to fund the American Sign Language program at the University of Toronto. Every other week, the ASL at UofT offers ASL classes from a trained professional, giving students the opportunity to learn a new culture and language.

There's a club that suits the needs and interests of everyone. In the off chance that you aren't attracted to any of these clubs, you are also able to create a new club by speaking to the Clubs and Merchandise Director at the ICSS.

Innis Intramurals

For many students, the most exercise that they get is walking between their home and classes. Luckily, the ICSS's Athletics Portfolio oversees nearly a dozen intramurals teams. There's a sport for everyone, including basketball, dodgeball, ice hockey, water polo, soccer, ultimate frisbee, and volleyball. The teams are always eager for new players and joining a team is as easy as showing up at the right time and place.

The Athletics Portfolio recently created an Instagram account to keep everybody updated on their events and on intramural matches. Follow them at @innisathletics.

Course Unions

Outside of Innis College, there are plenty of opportunities to get involved in your community. A good start would be looking at your course union. It would be pretty surprising if your program lacked one — even the smallest programs have active course unions. One of the best things about course unions is that their events are usually more geared towards helping you develop in the field of study you're in. Expect to see networking events, graduate program info sessions, and academic seminars relevant to your program. On top of that, at each of these events, you have a chance to meet others in your program. Maybe you'll bump into past, present, or future classmates.

Other Clubs

If you're still not sure about what you can be involved with, then you're in luck because U of T has more than 1000 registered clubs, 900 of which are on the St. George campus. There's a club for everything and each one offers opportunities for everybody. Do you have Albanian heritage or want to learn more about Albanian culture? Check out the Albanian Student Union! Want to help promote environmental awareness and advocacy? Climate Action Toronto is the club for you! Still don't believe that there's a club for everything? Well, the existence of the U of T Tax Law Association would suggest otherwise.

So whether you're excited to join a new club, looking to try your hand in a leadership position, or just want to meet new people, keep an eye out for all these clubs and events next semester!

And remember, *The Innis Herald* always welcomes new writers, photographers, and illustrators! If you want to get involved, send us an email at exec.herald@gmail.com.

U of T's own 'Unsung Voices'

Student filmmakers get their start with Reel Asian's intensive summer program

COURTESY OF CONNIE TSANG / REEL ASIAN

The Reel Asian International Film Festival provides a space for Asian Canadian filmmakers to showcase their work and learn from one another.

Julie Shi

ARTS & CULTURE

Twenty-three years. Nine days a year. Thirty-two screenings this year.

The Reel Asian International Film Festival once again brought Asian and Asian diaspora stories to the cinematic forefront, with meetings and screenings hosted across downtown Toronto and North York from November 7 to 15. Through these events, the festival strives to introduce mainstream Canadian audiences to the world of Asian film and foster an awareness of and appreciation for diverse styles of storytelling and creative media.

For the past eight years, an annual feature in the festival's programming has been the film debuts of the budding filmmakers who were nurtured by its intensive Unsung Voices summer program. The *Innis Herald* caught up with this year's Reel Asian program facilitator, Aram Siu Wai Collier, and U of T student and alumni participants to discuss the meaning and highlights of their time with Unsung Voices.

The Unsung Voices of Asian Canadian youth

Expanding its educational programming in 2011, the Unsung Voices program added a dimension to the festival that guides the first steps of seven eager pan-Asian youth, ages 15-29, on their journey to becoming filmmakers by mentoring them through the processes for video production. As the program site notes, new projects "by young filmmakers who represent the community will contribute to diverse voices and content on screen."

Running from June to August, the workshops cover three major skill sets—technical, creative, and management—that are integrated throughout the program. As recent graduate Shubhi Shani explains, June is dedicated to script writing as well as learning the overall technical and creative procedure of filmmaking. Production gets under way in July and for Shani, this period was marked by "12-hour days filled with steep learning curves, laughter, sweat, and lots of movie magic." This growth and dedication culminate in a month of editing in August to prepare their shorts for their November debut.

From school to screen

Equating her experience to "actual professional development," fourth-year student Angela Feng also emphasizes the significance of experiential learning for such tasks as sound mixing, gaffing, and art direction. In fact, this practical component is what drove Feng to apply for unsung Voices in the first place. As a Cinema Studies student at U of T, where course content is limited to theory and film criticism, Feng had been seeking "opportunities to expand [her] understanding of on-set roles."

When she saw an ad on Facebook calling for young Asian Canadians searching for a doorway into filmmaking, she knew she had to apply. Working in a small team of just seven people, Feng got what she was looking for. Not only did Unsung Voices allow her to manage the writing, direction, and production of her own short film, she was also able to help others do the same, filling in various crew positions so all seven women could bring their dreams to screen.

For U of T alum Sahar Golshan, the program itself is a dream come true. Unwinding from exams and school, Golshan celebrated the start of summer at Hot Docs. Another annual film festival, Hot Docs brings documentaries from across the globe to Toronto's—and Golshan's—doorstep. She recalls "spending days watching three documentaries a day" because she was "entranced by the [ability] of film to convey the story of social movements and intimate family relationships."

Combining her "deep love and respect" for documentaries and her passion for writing, Golshan felt that Unsung Voices provided her with an incredible platform to realize her "dream to put forth a story that challenged the trope of the Immigrant Success Story." Golshan's short, Kar, which translates to "work" in Farsi, explores the changing landscape of cars, labor, and family.

"A year ago," Golshan comments, "I would not dream of making my own film, let alone having it premiere at TIFF." Now, Kar is recognized through the Air Canada Short Film Award. Unsung Voices created "a huge gateway into documentary filmmaking" for Golshan.

Shani was likewise enchanted by the potentials of "visual storytelling." Shani is a Book and Media Studies major; her interest in the film and television industry was piqued by an Early Television Studies class that she happened upon in third year. As it turns out, this class was pivotal to Shani's passion for film and investment in Unsung Voices. Discussing how features from costumes and lighting to character actions, dialogue, and set design interact to make and

COURTESY OF CONNIE TSANG / REEL ASIAN

Current student Shubhi Shani is "grateful to Reel Asian for giving seven first-time female filmmakers a platform and foundation for their voices."

Cinema studies student Angela Feng learned many professional skills through the Unsung Voices program, including sound mixing, gaffing, and art direction.

Unsung Voices allowed recent U of T alum Sahar Golshan to combine "her 'deep love and respect' for documentaries and her passion for writing."

deliver meaning, Shani reflects that, "I had never truly enjoyed or connected with course material in that way before."

Finding 'reel' communities

For all three women, Unsung Voices will always stand out for the inclusive and creative communities that the program and Reel Asian introduced to them.

As part of the program's first ever all-female cohort, Feng describes Unsung Voices as, "a blessed experience" that was "entirely positive and focused on Asian female expression," a focal point that the industry's dominant institutions and outward faces often do not reflect. Shani reinforced this sentiment, saying, "I'm grateful to Reel Asian for giving seven first-time female filmmakers a platform and foundation for their voices."

Moreover, from the effusive praise that Feng, Shani and Golshan gave, the festival is more than successful at welcoming and embracing emerging filmmakers in the city's creative Asian diaspora communities. What sets Reel Asian apart from other festivals, Shani asserts, is that it is "solely committed to uplifting Asian voices." Golshan especially appreciated that her introduction to film foregrounded the experiences of and stories told by Asian youth.

Feng also points to another layer of engagement as the festival enables participants to increase "our contact with the diasporic community." Aside from programming like Unsung Voices and the festival, Golshan references outreach such as the Youth Critics Initiative, which seeks to facilitate critical dialogue and engagement about Asian Canadian arts among budding film practitioners. "All this makes for a very unique space for emerging young filmmakers in the city," she attests.

Golshan remembers that during the festival, after nine days of meeting other youth participating in Reel Asian as well as other programs run by such film festivals as Inside Out LGBT, Caribbean Tales International and Regent Park, her motivation to make and sustain relationships with other Asian artists grew significantly. This sentiment was not new to Golshan. Throughout her time with Unsung Voices, she recognizes that the staff, many young and of diverse backgrounds, "embody inclusivity and creativity through their everyday interactions" with other youth involved in the festival.

According to Golshan, "this kind of connection to community makes me want to continue to make short documentaries and fulfill my goal of making a feature-length documentary in the future."

"Filmmaking is dope, and I want to do it."

Passion and storytelling should not be restricted by financial struggles and access to technical training. Indeed, as Feng puts it, "[filmmaking] is dope, and I want to do it." For the vast majority, however, these limitations appear far too often and discourage creative risks that could grow into something beautiful. Unsung Voices therefore strives to open itself to as many Asian Canadian youth as possible with most program elements available to participants free of charge.

Shani confirms this openness and accessibility, explaining that "you just need a passion for film and have a story to tell." Acknowledging that seeing a film through all the stages of pre-production, production and post-production is hard work, she also assures that having an intrinsic determination and drive to create will propel you through the process. "The experience was one of a kind."

As Golshan notes, "film is a visual language that we should all have access to." For Asian Canadian filmmakers, that access could start by sharing their unsung voices at Reel Asian.

Innis "eats up" competition

Daria Mancino — INNIS THROWBACK

The November 1985 edition of the *Innis Herald* celebrated a historic win for Innis College—two Innis teams tied for first place in a charity pizza eating competition.

The event, sponsored by the Blue and White Society and local pizzeria owner Frank Veteres, raised money for United Way. Each slice eaten represented a $4.00 donation to the charity.

Both Innis teams finished eight slices of pizza, meaning these brave competitors raised a total of $64.00 for United Way.

One team included *Herald* features editor Brian Connell-Tombs and was coached by two other *Herald* contributors, photographer Michelle Baily and editor Fred Mott.

The lucky winners were awarded their prize—"two dozen super stein mugs from Frank Veteres"—by Q107 radio personality The Iceman.

Ho-ho-ho down with hot cocoa

Al-Amin Ahamed

RECIPES

Folks, it's that time of the year again!! Have them sleigh bells ringing because 'tis the season to ho-ho-ho down with some Mariah Carey blasting in the background. Baby, it's cold outside, so we all need some peace, joy, and love with some hot cocoa! Y'all gonna be dashing through the snow and rockin' around the Christmas tree because we about to get POPPIN with this heart-warming and satisfying mug of chocolatey goodness.

KK as you may know ya pal Al is always into giving so I'm blessing the Innis community this festive season with my signature spiced hot cocoa recipe. Easy, quick, and super yummy, this recipe can be multiplied to satisfy any number of guests. All it starts with is a homemade hot cocoa mix that you can prepare in advance and store for any snow-filled evening.

HOT COCOA MIX

- 1 ¾ cup of icing sugar
- 1 ¼ cup cocoa powder (unsweetened)
- 2 ½ cup milk powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tsp cornstarch
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp ground nutmeg
- ½ tsp cayenne pepper (optional)

DIRECTIONS

1. Sift all dry ingredients into a bowl and mix
2. Store in an air-tight container

PREPARATION

1. Add approximately 2 tbsp of the hot cocoa mix into a mug
2. Add hot milk or water
3. Stir and adjust for flavouring

It's that simple!!

JAZZ IT UP (suggestions when serving):

- Top with whipped cream and a sprinkle of cinnamon
- Mix in 2 peppermint candies, top with whipped cream and extra crushed candies on top
- Serve with a candy cane or cinnamon stick to use as a stirring stick (peppermint or cinnamon flavour will gradually infuse in)
- Top with mini marshmallows and crushed graham crackers

There is an endless medley of extra add-ons you can use to jingle up your cocoa, but honestly just the mix alone leads to a darn good cup of hot chocolate. Whether you're naughty or nice, this recipe is bound to perk you up this cold winter season. So, snuggle with bae or curl up in bed all alone like me and enjoy a decadent, hot and vivacious cup of liquid gold. Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!

COURTESY OF AL-AMIN AHAMED

Make a big batch of Al's homemade hot cocoa powder to keep you warm all winter long.

Season of Change

Cynthia Zheng

POETRY

COURTESY OF CYNTHIA ZHENG

Seasons are changing and so am I

And so the snow rushes to the ground
and time tries to keep up with the pace
but little do you and I know
it is now December.

Autumn's farewell will soon come
with a feeling so bitter yet so warm,
and a whisper so soft you could only hear
if you listen closely,
'see you next year.'

It is now December.

Red, orange, yellow...
a mix of leaves so beautiful
and all covered in snow.

Like friends you haven't seen in a long time,
the colours embrace each other
with a hug so tight yet so sweet,
as they begin to realize
it is now December.

As I pace down the streets,
crystal snow dances
to the melodies of the upcoming season,
leaving small traces of footprints
on my scarf, my hat, my gloves
and winter comes strolling in
with a speech so confident you could clearly hear
from afar,
'I am here for you.'

It is now December.

Once upon a time,
I wished for static change
because I didn't want the uncertainty to absorb me
instead
I received constant change
because the uncertainty simply wanted to befriend
me.

The seasons soothe me,
"don't be afraid,
you can't avoid change
but you can embrace it.
Take tiny steps,
take it day by day,
and take it easy."

Autumn reminds you and I–
it is okay to be different,
it is okay to dream (in colour),
it is okay to change,
it is okay.

Winter comforts you and I–
it is okay to feel confused,
it is okay to feel lost (like snowflakes dancing into the uncertainty),
it is okay to feel,
it is okay.

It is now December.

You and I–
let's welcome December with open arms, shall we?

Do you hear what I hear? Do you see what I see?

COURTESY OF JAMES DEVANEY / FILMMAGIC

Rochelle Raveendran gives us a window into the childhood memories she associates most closely with some of the biggest songs of the season.

Rochelle Raveendran
ARTS & CULTURE

Every November when Toronto's 98.1 CHFI radio station begins their tradition of playing all Christmas music programming until Christmas Day, I am reminded of how Jim Carrey underwent CIA torture endurance training to stay sane while filming *How The Grinch Stole Christmas*. Although I am by no means a Grinch, hearing a non-stop stream of Christmas music for over a month causes me to grind my teeth to the point of gum recession. However, as the last Christmas of the decade approaches, I have found myself listening to Christmas music and wallowing in nostalgia much more than usual. Here are the five Christmas songs that are the most deeply connected to my childhood memories.

1. All I Want For Christmas Is You by Mariah Carey

In elementary school, one of my good friends was called Mariah. It is perhaps the most difficult namesake to have to deal with, next to Margaret Thatcher, Beyoncé, and Jesus Christ. The first time I heard Mariah Carey's name was in Grade Four. One day, my teacher asked my class with a sick smile on her face if anyone knew which pop star had made headlines for demanding 20 kittens to be present while she switched on the Christmas lights in London. My friend raised her hand and said, "Mariah Carey," with an expression of such pained resignation and bleak acceptance that I doubt it had ever befallen the face of an eight-year-old, or ever will again. Her eyes were black and appeared to say, "I have seen the face of God and it was weeping." The image is so deeply burned into my brain that even though I have since lost touch with Mariah, whenever I hear the opening notes of this song, I think of her burdened eight-year-old soul and how tortuous her life must be.

2. Last Christmas by Wham!

One of the staple Christmas decorations in my house is a robot Santa Claus that, when it detects movement, buckles its knees and begins to sway from side to side as the chorus of this Wham! classic plays. My grandmother bought it over a decade ago and unfortunately, the ravages of time appear to have finally caught up with it as it has begun singing completely unprovoked. To make things even more horrific, the gears inside the robot have aged, so George Michael's vocals have been reduced to a grinding mess that sounds like Santa is suffering from lockjaw. Now, when I'm in a Dollarama and this song begins to play, my flight or fight response is triggered and my pupils dilate because I truly believe that this is the year my animatronic Santa Claus will become sentient and try to murder me.

3. The Chipmunk Song (Christmas Don't Be Late) by Alvin and the Chipmunks

My life can be divided into BC (Before Chipmunks) and AD (After Da-Chipmunks). My Alvin and the Chipmunks phase was so intense that if I somehow met a genie in 2007 and got three wishes, I would have spent them all individually wishing that Alvin, Simon, and Theodore Seville became real so that I could get into hijinks with them whilst also learning about the importance of family. When I hear this song, I think of my mother, who took me to the cinemas to see *Alvin and the Chipmunks and Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakwel*, paid full price for both DVDs, watched them multiple times with me at home, bought me several Happy Meals so I could collect all the chipmunk themed toys, and did not kick me out of the house while I incessantly sang "Oo ee oo aa aa, ting, tang, walla walla bing bang."

4. Frosty the Snowman

When I was growing up, the only kid's film that would play on the TV from January to November was the 2005 adaptation of *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. Though the ethnically ambiguous Oompa Loompas gave me the representation I craved as a young girl, this film was switched out in December for *Jack Frost* (1998). Michael Keaton plays a musician and an absentee father who dies in a car crash on the way to a gig on Christmas Day. He is resurrected the next year as a snowman and he teaches his son to play hockey before returning to the afterlife. This is the entire plot of the film. I am certain the CGI team were on Class A drugs because that is the only way I can imagine how someone could have envisioned and animated the snowdemon in that film. It was truly the nightmare before Christmas. Up until very recently I believed "Frosty the Snowman" was written for this movie and it was a constant puzzle to me how a story about a deadbeat dad reincarnated as an undead snowbeast could be described as, "a fairy-tale, they say."

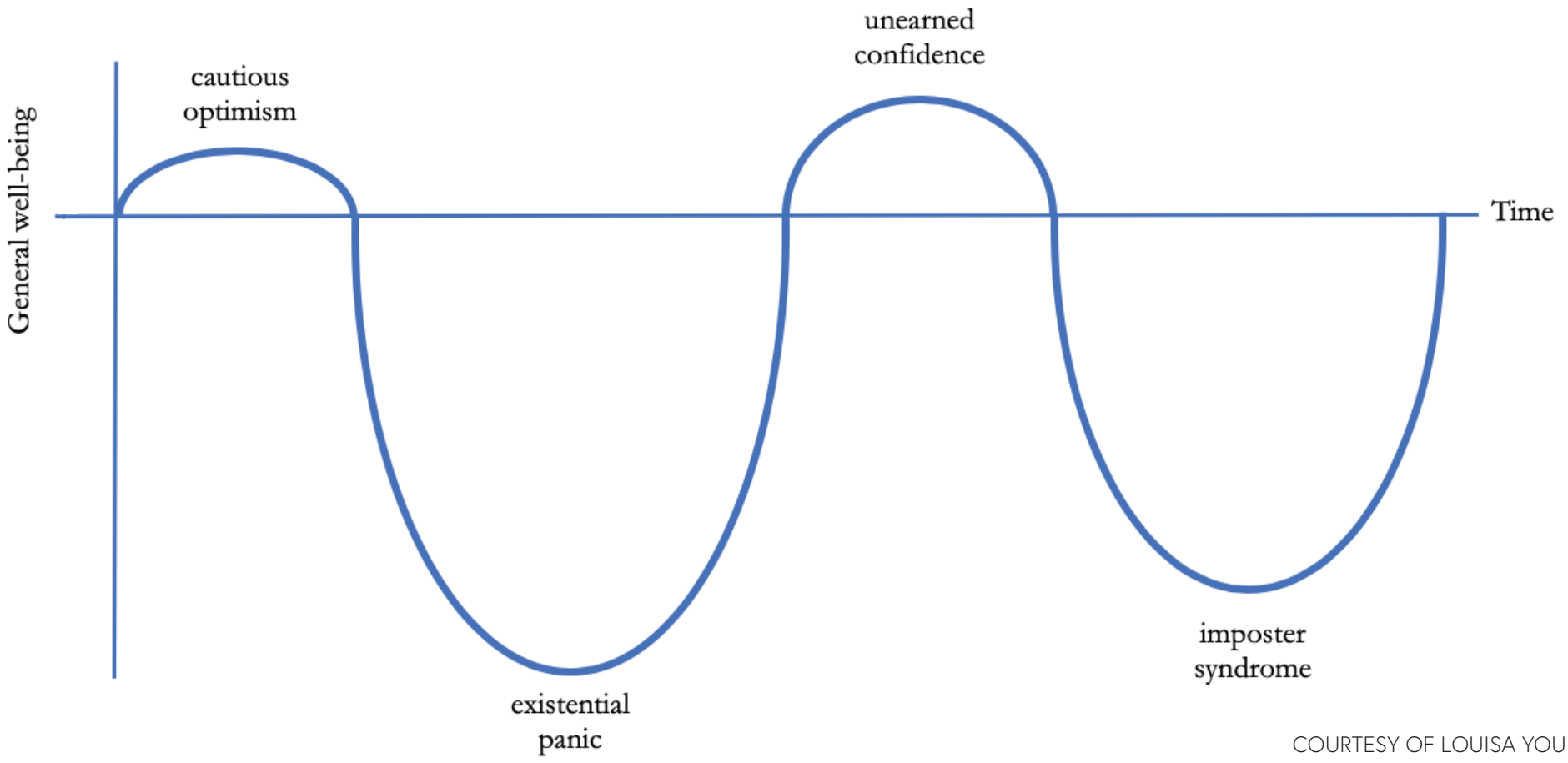
5. Silent Night

Years before the revolutionary musical *Hamilton* made waves in the performing arts, I was doing my own part to subvert racial stereotypes and challenge the status quo when I played Mary in my school's nativity play. I'd like to think that this decision was made by an up-and-coming teacher longing to prove themselves as a creative force in their department who also wanted to provoke incisive racial commentary in the production. The alternative, of course, is that I was cast in one of the few non-speaking roles that did not require dance or movement due to my teachers' acute awareness that if I had to do literally anything on stage, I would faint. Whatever the reasoning may be, as I sat on the stage cradling a biro-stained doll in my hands with a chorus of five-year-olds singing "Silent Night" around me, I knew I was making strides for women of colour everywhere.

Much of the nuances of Christmas songs are lost on me. I truly thought "I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus" was about a child walking in on his mother having a tragic affair and coming to terms with the realization that he lives in a broken home. This is perhaps why the lyrics and tune matter much less to me than the memories connected with each song, which range from the charming and wholesome to the mildly terrifying. However you choose to celebrate festivities this December, I wish you happy holidays, a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Unless you like Madonna's cover of "Santa Baby," in which case you deserve coal in your stocking.

A generally positive trend of rock bottoms

The mercurial nature of applications to grad school



COURTESY OF LOUISA YOU

Louisa You takes us on the emotional rollercoaster that is graduate school applications.

Louisa You

STUDENT LIFE

Applying to graduate school is a gruelling process, more often than not encompassing a roller coaster of emotions. Most advice websites will tell you to begin your journey at least a year in advance in order to allow yourself time to prepare for generalized tests and to research schools, programs, and advisors. As someone who only nailed down the schools I was applying to less than 3 weeks before all the applications were due, I experienced this wild ride at a breakneck pace.

Usually, the application process starts with general hope, cautious but excited optimism. "I want to go to grad school because..." The applicant is bolstered by the three or four previous years of undergrad where they worked hard and learned lots. They start to put together experiences and achievements to highlight on a polished CV or resume. Maybe they had been thinking about grad school for a long time and the prospect of starting this next step of life is thrilling. Scared but excited, they start the work.

This leads to a wild swing into existential panic. The applications are asking *so much*. While it is true that the submission is only a few pages of writing and some abstract, meaninglessly standardized numerical scores, each piece of the admission package requires so much introspection, research, and putting your entire being on the line. Do I really want to go to graduate school at all? Am I even good enough to be a competitive applicant and is there a point in putting myself out there, raw and exposed, only to be packaged into a marketable parcel worth about 100 dollars in application fees and rejected after a faceless admissions committee systematically judges my absolute worth? It is not a bad idea to take a gap year. Maybe it would be better to take a break from school altogether and become a Norwegian sheep farmer for a bit.

But slowly, with support and hugs and advice from the stands, the optimism starts to build back up, manifesting into mild nihilism and unstable confidence. "Nothing matters, so I might as well try." This idea might come from watching and re-watching season 3 of *The Good Place* during this time, but it helps. The applicant starts to reach out for help, a professor here, a previous lab supervisor there. Everyone is supportive and offers so many well wishes: "good luck!" and "you can do it" and "add oil!" (my personal favourite). After all, it is just one application process out of many. Get to work!

Aaaaand right back down. Because one of the best ways to improve is to ask for help, to hear other's stories, and to see examples. Although this is immensely helpful, it is also a prime set up for imposter syndrome (see: everyone else is better than I am). A prime instance of this was when my professor told me she applied to 10 graduate schools and I had only planned on applying to 4. Immediately after, I met two more professors who applied to 12 PhD programs each. "Yeah, you should be applying to 10-15 schools. Mathematically, it just makes sense to maximize the probability of getting in." Other applicants have such stellar publications and research experiences. Should the moving to Norway plan be revisited?

The process is an emotional roller coaster, to say the least. However, it is largely a story of hope. Zooming out, the graph shows a generally positive trend. The amplitude of the waves get smaller, each crest is higher than the last. With each fluctuation in well-being, the applicant ends up better than before and with a stronger application. Every tribulation is a testament to your courage and vulnerability to keep going.

~

Throughout these few months, I sent out emails to and scheduled meetings with every professor and supervisor who could offer me some advice. One particular meeting stood out. My research supervisor and professor from last year was in town for a conference and offered to meet with me during her lunch hour between presentations. There was definitely no pathetic fallacy: it was a gorgeous fall day, brisk and sunny, and I probably resembled a dementor, emerging from the house for the first time in two or three days.

But making my way downtown, I was reminded of a similar scenario almost exactly one year ago. At that point, as a meandering junior studying peace, conflict, and political science, I had no research experience, no personal academic interests, and no idea I would be pursuing further studies in psychology.

Last year, my professor held her office hours beginning at 8:30 am. As someone who struggled to get up for 10 o'clock classes, the prospect of being awake and alert enough for discussion at *8:30 in the morning* was daunting, to say the least. But her office was just two buildings down from my residence and she was somehow studying psychological concepts in global affairs and political science settings. That was what I wanted to do and I had to know how she did it.

As I was walking out of her office last year, she offered me a research assistant position. This year, Laura gave me a hug and told me I was doing everything right.

I thought about ending this article with an excerpt from my statement of interest, the crucial essay to be submitted with each grad school application, meticulously spelling out to the admissions committee, "I am good, please accept me". Then I was scared of the possible plagiarism consequences of including anything from my application word for word because with each submission I had to declare and sign that yes, this is original work, not reproduced anywhere else.

So instead of representing myself with the essay I have written about six drafts of to date, I am including a quote in honour of the writing that inspired this article.

Margaret Atwood writes,

"This is a photograph of me

It was taken some time ago.
At first it seems to be
a smeared
print"

U of T graduates more likely to be fired, always ten minutes late to work

COURTESY OF DARIA MANCINO

Daniel Li

SATIRE

Maclean's annual university ranking was released this month and, unsurprisingly, the University of Toronto rose to the top of each category, including a new category called, "Schools with Most Late Students."

"*Maclean's* analyzed alumni data from all Canadian universities and found that while University of Toronto graduates were more successful, nearly 90% had been dismissed from a job at least once," wrote *Maclean's*. Of the students fired, *Maclean's* found that the reason was almost always due to the graduates' inability to show up to work on time. Using employment data collected by the University of Toronto, *The Innis Herald* found graduates were, on average, ten minutes late every day.

Several graduates were interviewed on the impact of the university's policy to start classes ten minutes after the hour, dubbed "U of T time." Jim Chipman, a graduate who was recently dismissed from his position at Ontario Liberal Party, stated, "I honestly forgot that the rest of the world doesn't operate that way. How was I to know time works differently in the outside world?"

"It kinda feels like my whole body has just adapted to the time difference, ya know? What is that called again? Circular rhythm? Yeah, it's like my entire circular rhythm is messed up," said Liam Wong. It was long suspected that U of T time had detrimental effects on students. Timi Sofa at U of T's Centre for Biological Timing and Cognition has been a long-time advocate for removing U of T time. "U of T time is holding students back. Many spend years confused that classes aren't starting at the time that they are listed to start."

Another graduate, Kerry Wright, found the issue to be more technical. "I had spent hours reprogramming my phone and laptop to always show the time ten minutes behind. Now I forget how to revert that." Kerry ended up buying a new laptop and phone before she ended up showing up to work on time.

Meric Gertler finally agrees to divest after inheriting billions in green energy companies

Daniel Li

SATIRE

Last Thursday, the University of Toronto (U of T) released a statement outlining their decision to begin the process of divesting university assets from companies linked to the fossil fuel industry. This decision comes in light of the recent news that Meric Gertler, the President of U of T, has obtained ownership of several companies in the renewable energy industry.

After nearly 6 years of advocacy and protests, students are relieved to hear the news. "I'm really happy to hear that we've finally taken this step. We're now one step closer to mild global catastrophe and partial societal collapse rather than total global and societal destruction," says Rachel Carson, a 4th-year biology student.

However, other students were less impressed. Following the University's statement, a Facebook event was organized titled, "Down with Divestment". The organizer of the event, a 3rd-year political science student named Fred Singer, had a few words to say. "If the university earns less from their investments, then we the students just end up paying more. It's basic trickle-down economics," he scoffed. Fred stood outside Simcoe Hall protesting for nearly two hours before he realized he had forgotten to turn off his space heater at home.

COURTESY OF DARIA MANCINO

Routines and taking it slow

Immersing myself in the world of Animal Crossing

Sabine Osmann-Deyman

ARTS & CULTURE

I've played video games for as long as I can remember. There was a Nintendo 64 in my home before I was even born and my brother and I exhausted every home and handheld console we had.

There's something that a lot of video games do well, and it's (to me) the most important thing they could do: they immerse you. They bring you into their world, away from your own, and your suspension of disbelief can be so strong you become the characters you play in ways other media doesn't achieve. They can, in most forms, let you take action in the story instead of being a passive participant. What you do in a game is your own accomplishment.

I mostly enjoy games where I don't stress out too much. If I can take my time to think through and plan how I want to spend my time, energy, and resources, I'm likely to have a good time.

We hear all the time about the negative effects of video games, particularly from those who don't play them, but in my experience we rarely hear about their more positive benefits. Admittedly, I doubt most of the games I play do anything extraordinary for me in my day to day life, although arguably being a hobby and a source of joy is pretty good in and of itself.

The Animal Crossing Series is different.

My first Animal Crossing game is probably most people's first: Animal Crossing New Leaf. It's been a while since I've played it. (Admittedly, I've lost my copy and I've been stubbornly trying not to buy a new one). I did, however, buy it when it was released in 2013 and played it most days for about 3 years straight. Alone or with friends, I made sure to find time to play this game.

Animal Crossing is a game that runs in real time. Whatever time it is in the real world when you play is the in-game time as well. You go around talking to villagers, collecting things (fish, insects, etc.), and slowly upgrading your village's amenities as its mayor. It's a game that encourages you to take things slow; it even "punishes" you for running (see: literally going fast!) and wears down the grass below your feet (which is ugly and we only want pretty villages). Take your time, walk from place to place, and slowly build up your various collections and friendships. Most people will play daily to maximize what they can do and how quickly they reach milestones and unlock amenities, but playing daily also keeps your village in good shape and prevents villagers from moving out.

Playing daily really helped me out in my regular, real-world daily life. At a time of my life that was hectic, filled with deadlines and extracurriculars and things to do, it really helped to have a space in a different world where everything was *fine*. There were few serious consequences if I couldn't play every day, so there was never any reason to avoid the game out of fear.

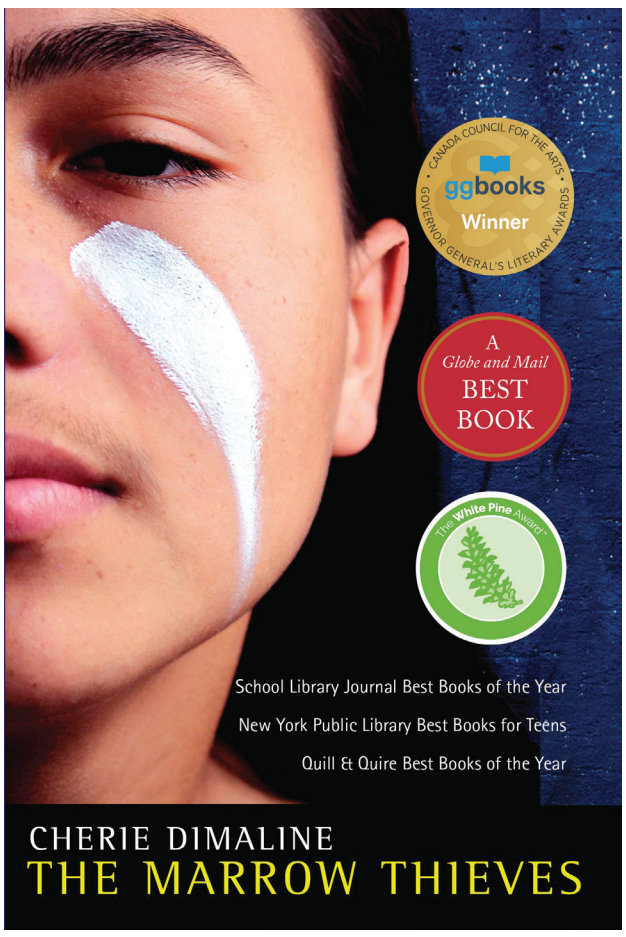
Because of the game's ties to 24-hour days, it also helped me establish routines where I otherwise couldn't. Anyone with a mood disorder can tell you how vital this is in recovery; routines are often the reason we get anything done. Having something to do at a certain time every morning that involved accomplishing tasks was great for helping me get out of bed every day to do other real-world tasks as well.

It's been a long time since I've played Animal Crossing. Now that I'm in the thick of my final classes in university, I really miss it. I got a Nintendo Switch recently, and the new installment for Animal Crossing (New Horizons) is all I can think about even as I play other great games. In the new year, it'll be nice to revisit friends from the previous games and make new memories. If I reinforce some good habits along the way, then that'll be nice too.

Canadian authors you should definitely be reading

Shankhalika Srikanth
ARTS & CULTURE

For many of us growing up, reading Canadian literature in school was limited to reading older white, primarily male writers. Here are some strong voices that are changing how the face of literature looks to match the country's increasingly diverse population.



Cherie Dimaline is an award-winning Métis writer whose first book, *The Marrow Thieves*, won the Governor General's Literary Award as well as numerous other awards and has been on bestseller lists since its publication in 2017. Aimed at a youth audience (but powerful and gripping for readers of any age), *The Marrow Thieves* is set in a dystopic future where Indigenous people are hunted for their bone marrow, which contains the ability to dream—an ability that has been lost by the rest of the population. Set in a dystopia that is much too close to past and current realities, *The Marrow Thieves* is jarring and haunting, but it is ultimately a hopeful and inspirational narrative.

Her most recent book for an adult audience, *Empire of Wild,* is about a woman searching for her husband, who has gone missing after an unfortunate encounter with the Métis community's werewolf-like figure called the Rogarou.

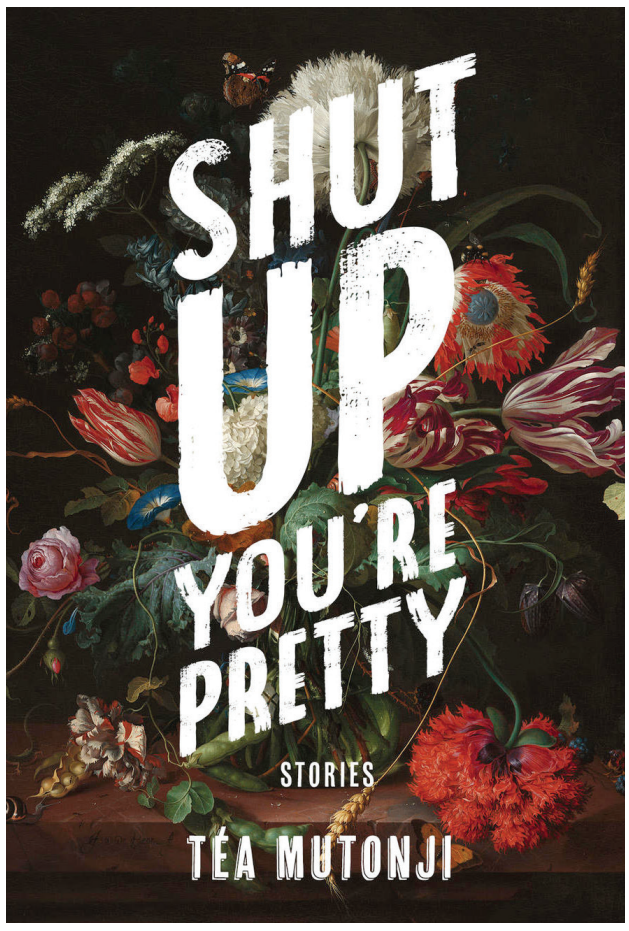
The novel does an excellent job of inverting the damsel-in-distress trope. In *Empire of Wild* it is our protagonist Joan who has to save her husband, and whose very memory serves as her husband's only beacon of hope and link to sanity as he awaits his rescue.

Dimaline brings Joan's character to life. She is powerful, but not superhuman; someone you can always root for, but not idealized. The honesty with which Dimaline portrays Joan's humanity and flaws only serves to highlight the character's strength. This honesty is most evident in the novel's assessment of the insidious ways in which colonialism is working to deprive Indigenous peoples of their land to this day.

Vivek Shraya is a multi-talented artist, musician, novelist, playwright, filmmaker, and poet, as well as an assistant professor of Creative Writing at the University of Calgary. Raised in Alberta and of South Asian descent, her work speaks to her experiences as a trans artist of colour.

Her first novel, *She of the Mountains*, tells the coming-of-age story of the unnamed protagonist as he explores his sexual and gender identity, and the many ways in which a relationship can change and evolve. We are privy to the main character's constant inner battle with his own identity—something that may feel very familiar, especially to queer youth. The lyrical quality of this narrative is perfectly suited to be interspersed with stories from Hindu mythology, specifically about the goddess Parvati and her relationship with her husband Shiv and son Ganesha. This twin narrative will be instantly recognizable to those who have been raised on these stories already, but it is not necessary to be familiar with them to appreciate their truthfulness and beauty. Shraya's retelling is at once authentic and fresh. Delving into Goddess Parvati's psyche, it celebrates the love that exists between partners, and between parent and child. Complete with artwork by Raymond Biesinger, *She of the Mountains* is a celebration and exploration of love and identity.

Shraya's more recent bestseller, *I'm Afraid of Men*, is a forceful indictment of the causes and perpetrators of misogyny as well as a careful study of the effects it has on individuals. Apart from being a voice for communities that are often not heard, her message is also not one we are used to hearing, which is that being the victim of bigotry does not make one incapable of inflicting bigotry on others. Drawing from her own experiences, Shraya illustrates how not only straight white men, but members of marginalized communities, herself included, can perpetuate misogyny in society. This autobiographical look at homophobia, transphobia, and sexism traces everything back to misogyny, and asks us to re-evaluate how we view gender. Coming in at under a hundred pages, *I'm Afraid of Men* is concise and poignant. Its words will stay with you long after you close the back cover, which reads, "Men are Afraid of Me."



Téa Mutonji's collection of short stories, *Shut Up You're Pretty*, was a finalist for the Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize and is the first publication from VS. Books, an imprint of Arsenal Pulp Press created by Vivek Shraya in order to support young writers who are Indigenous, Black, or people of colour. A student at the U of T Scarborough campus, Mutonji is originally from the Republic of the Congo and immigrated as a child to Scarborough, where her book is set. The collection of stories centres on the character of Loli, starting from her childhood in the Galloway neighbourhood of Scarborough into her transition into a young woman. The stories shine a harsh light on the realities of race and sexuality. The title of the book comes from one of the stories and speaks to the demeaning nature of being valued for your physical appearance (Mutonji was convinced to title one of her stories this after a friend yelled it at her in a bar). There is a poetic quality to the collection, and the entire book walks the line between poetry and novella. The experience of reading it is like being given access to a snapshot of Loli's life, and is at once stark and beautiful.

Téa Mutonji, a recent UTSC alumna, published her first collection of short stories this past year. Her work "walks the line between poetry and novella," writes Shankhalika Srikanth.

AN EVENING IN THE LOUNGE

Sarah Laudenbach

PLAYLIST

Filled with nothing but covers of songs from the 1930s, 40s, and 50s, "An Evening in the Lounge" is exactly what it sounds like—the kind of lounge music you might listen to during cocktail hour at a local jazz bar. Whether you're a fan of Sinatra and Darin, or Ellington and Giordano, this playlist has something for everybody. Close your eyes, lean back, and pretend you're sipping bourbon with your best gal in a smokey, moonlit jazz club.

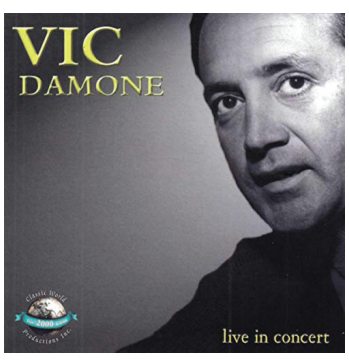
Scan the QR code to listen on Spotify!

#1
"My Baby Just Cares For Me – Live"
Jeff Goldblum & The Mildred Snitzer Orchestra

Having just released his second jazz album, now is the perfect time to share Goldblum's jazz chops in his cover of "My Baby Just Cares For Me," originally written for the 1930 film *Whoopee!* (Because I love Jeff Goldblum. A lot.)

#2
"A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square"
The Brian Setzer Orchestra

Written in 1939, "A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square" has been made popular again by the book and television show *Good Omens*. Having been covered countless times, this song has a distinctly forties-lounge-sound to it.



#3
"When Lights Are Low"
Vic Damone

A massively popular big-band singer in the fifties and sixties, Vic Damone's "When Lights Are Low" is a romantic swing song, upbeat enough to dance to, but slow enough that you won't be stepping on your partner's toes if your something of a dancing novice.

#4
"Beyond the Sea"
Bobby Darin

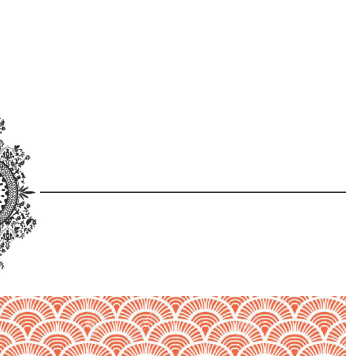
A personal favorite of mine, Bobby Darin's 1959 version of the 1945 French tune "La Mer" is a finger-snapping, toe-tapping, hum-along song. "Beyond the Sea" is upbeat and wistful all at once, musing on the singer's love waiting for him to return from his station on a ship.

#5
"Twilight Time"
The Platters

The Platters' cover of the 1944 song "Twilight Time" is by far the best-known version, having topped the American R&B charts in 1958. With beautiful harmonies and a swinging melody, "Twilight Time" is a true earworm.

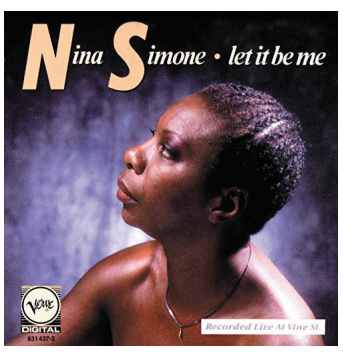
#6
"Fly Me to the Moon (In Other Words)"
Frank Sinatra and Count Basie

Everybody has heard Frank Sinatra's seminal "Fly Me To The Moon (In Other Words). Written in 1954 and recorded in 1964, this is the ultimate lounge love song. If you're ever making a playlist for your significant other, this one usually goes over pretty well.



#7
"My Little Brown Book"
Duke Ellington and John Coltrane

From Duke Ellington and John Coltrane's 1962 album of the same name, "My Little Brown Book" slows us down, moving from the dance floor to cocktail hour. A solely instrumental track, this song is a tribute to Ellington and Coltrane's masterful jazz musicianship.

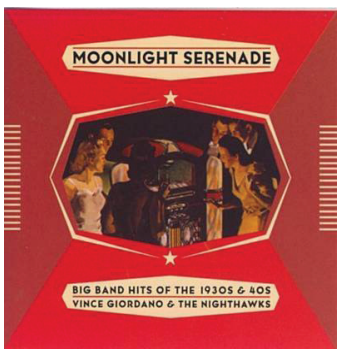


#8
"If You Knew/Let It Be Me"
Nina Simone

After changing her name to disguise her identity from her family, Nina Simone became one of the most famous female jazz singers of the sixties and seventies. Her incredibly powerful voice produces the slowest and sweetest of jazz melodies.

#9
"The Blue Room"
Catherine Russell

From the phenomenal film *Kill Your Darlings*, which tells the story of Allen Ginsberg (Daniel Radcliffe) and the Beat Generation, "The Blue Room" is an easy-going jazz piece. This song will make you believe you're slow-dancing the night away in a smoke-filled 1940s club.

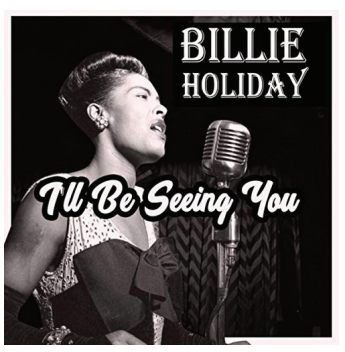


#10
"Manhattan"
Vince Giordano and the Nighthawks

From the soundtrack of the 2016 film *Café Society*, "Manhattan" is performed by Vince Giordano And The Nighthawks. Having begun his career as a jazz musician in 1966, Giordano specializes in performing music of the 1920s and 30s—"Manhattan" absolutely exemplifies that.

#11
"I Fall in Love Too Easily"
Chet Baker

With beautiful vocals and a slow jazz band playing in the background, "I Fall In Love Too Easily" sounds as though you're listening to it on old vinyl. The slightly grainy audio quality sets the scene of a dimly-lit jazz club, with a neon sign shining in the rain.

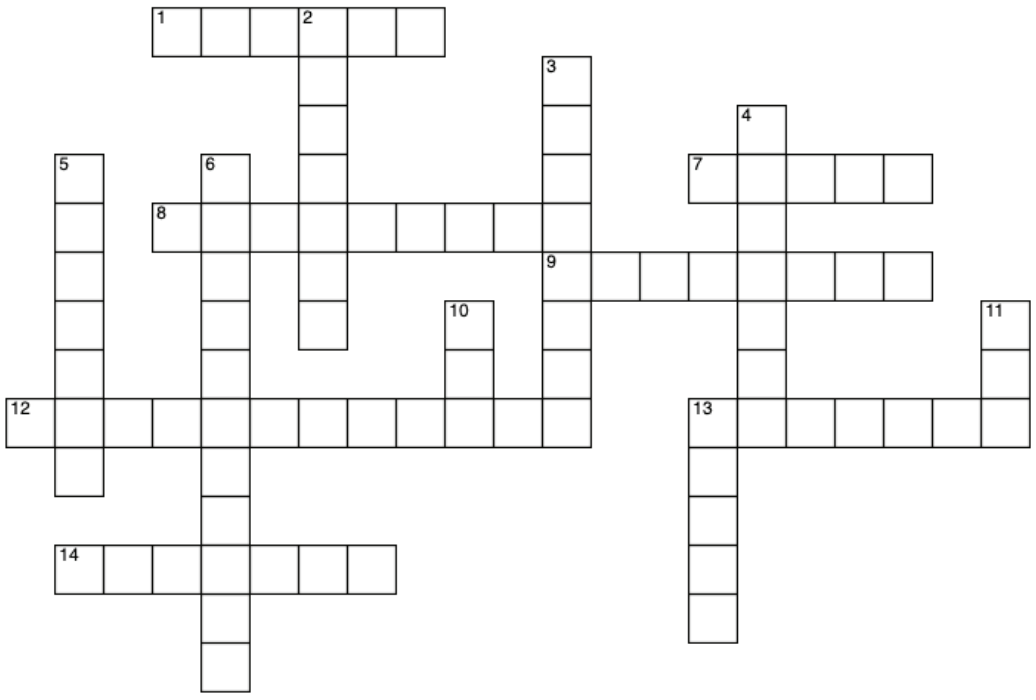


#12
"I'll Be Seeing You"
Billie Holiday

Billie Holiday's "I'll Be Seeing You" is a melancholy ode to saying goodbye. Holiday's version of the song was the last transmission ever sent by NASA to the Mars rover *Opportunity*, before the tear-jerking conclusion to *Opportunity*'s mission on February 13th, 2019.

CROSSWORD

COURTESY OF THE INNIS HERALD



ACROSS

1. The first name of a popular Christmas singer as well as Rochelle's friend in Grade 4
7. The last name of Innis's new Dean of Students
8. Who students can talk to CR/NCR a course past the deadline
9. The magazine that rated U of T as #1 in the "Schools with Most Late Students" category
12. The organization where Maddy Allen serves as a field manager
13. The last name of U of T's President
14. The last name of the author of "Shut Up You're Pretty"

DOWN

2. Innis's LGBTQ+ advocacy and support group
3. Important layers to wear underneath your jeans this winter
4. The optional ingredient in Al's hot cocoa
5. The 1930's film for which "My Baby Just Cares For Me" was originally written
6. The newest Animal Crossing game for Nintendo Switch
10. The standardized exam some graduate school programs require
11. U of T alumna Sahar Golshan's short film that won the Air Canada Short Film Award
13. The Canadian political party that won the fewest seats this election

SUDOKU

COURTESY OF PUZZLES.CA

EASY

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4								

Happy Holidays from the *Herald*!

COURTESY OF JAMES CHAPMAN